

EXCLUSIVELY YOURS

LBJ and Bob Hope Smash Hits

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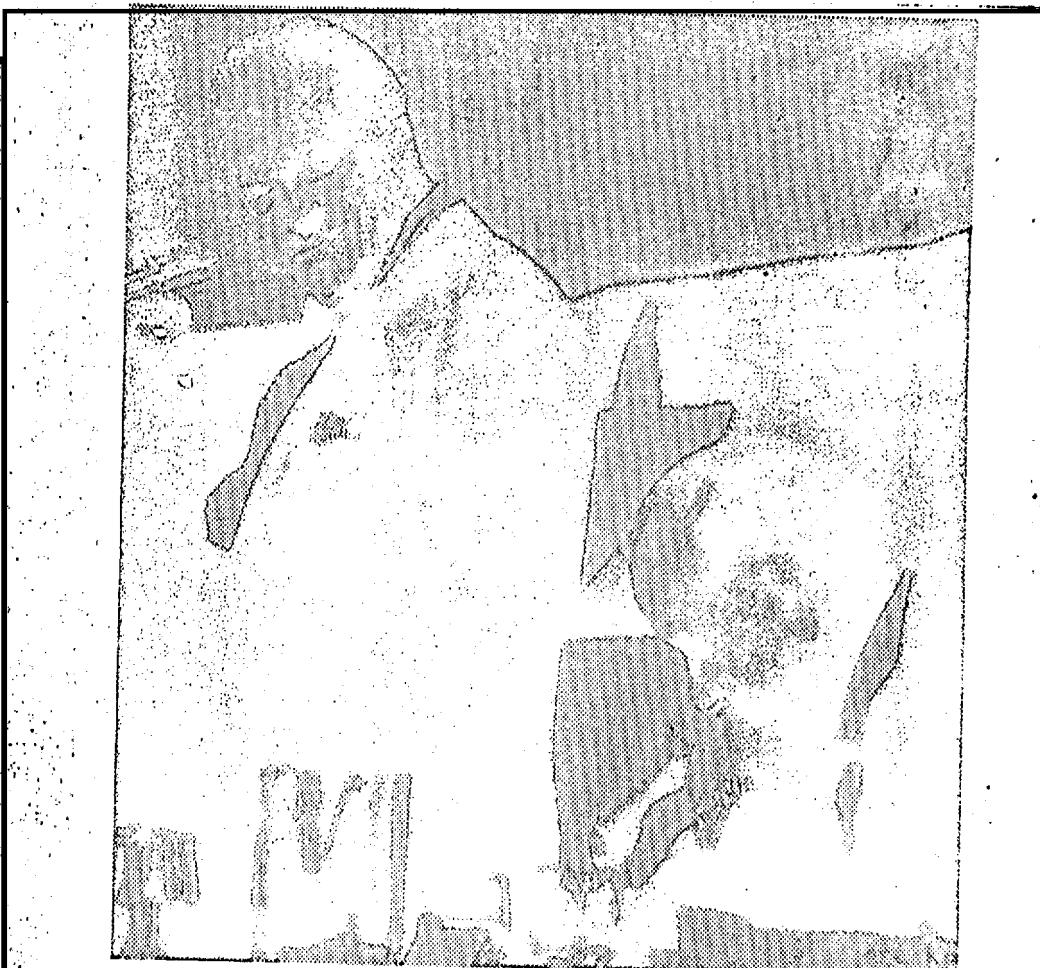
By BETTY BEALE
Star Staff Writer

Lyndon Johnson got off some good ones. Bob Hope made fun of the Democrats in front of LBJ. One thousand persons hung on their every word. And the evening ended in the dramatic singing of the "Battle Hymn of the Republic" in a darkened room by Anita Bryant backed up by the whole Army Chorus.

The USO "Salute to Bob Hope" dinner celebrating its 25th anniversary was, in a word, a smash.

How could it fail with the country's No. 1 citizen and No. 1 comedian swapping cracks; with John Daly acting as emcee; with Harvey Firestone courageously rising from his wheelchair and, despite his slow-mending broken hip, delivering his speech as chairman on his two feet; with handsome, square-jawed Walter Hoving, president of Tiffany's, giving the inside picture of its beginnings when the late John D. Rockefeller, Al Smith and others all pitched in; with famed Gen. "Rosie" O'Donnell — who is so "tough he gets fan mail from John Wayne," said Hope — speaking as USO president; and with Joan Crawford, glittering in white satin and dripping diamonds from her ears with gobs of them around her neck, shining like a beacon at the head table?

PRESIDENT JOHNSON strode into the huge ballroom of the Washington Hilton at 10:17 p.m. heralded by "Hail to the Chief" played by the Marine Band. Introduced at once, he said he had come "to honor a man with two very unusual traits."



—United Press International

Bob Hope tickles President Johnson with a joke as the Chief Executive breaks out in laughter during the USO's 25th anniversary dinner saluting comedian Hope last night. The President dropped in unexpectedly.

"He's an actor who isn't so far as I know — at least now — running for public office. And he is a frequent visitor to Viet Nam who has never been asked to testify before the Senate Foreign Relations

Committee. At least not yet." "I understand he was planning to testify," he continued when the chuckles subsided, "until he discovered there was live coverage on only one network. That wasn't the

friendly network. It isn't that he wanted the additional exposure. It's just that he refused to go up against the 'I Love Lucy' rating without help."

"Our late beloved President